

NORTH CAROLINA POULTRY PRODUCTS INSPECTION LAW

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Article 49D.

Poultry Products Inspection Act.

§ 106-549.49. Short title.

This Article shall be designated as the North Carolina Poultry Products Inspection Act. (1971, c. 677, s. 1.)

§ 106-549.50. Purpose and policy.

(a) Poultry and poultry products are an important source of the nation's total supply of food. It is essential in the public interest that the health and welfare of consumers be protected by assuring that slaughtered poultry and poultry products distributed to them are wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged. Unwholesome, adulterated, or misbranded poultry or poultry products are injurious to the public welfare, destroy markets for wholesome, not adulterated, and properly labeled and packaged poultry and poultry products, and result in sundry losses to poultry producers and processors of poultry and poultry products, as well as injury to consumers. The unwholesome, adulterated, mislabeled, or deceptively packaged articles can be sold at lower prices and compete unfairly with the wholesome, not adulterated, and properly labeled and packaged articles, to the detriment of consumers and the public generally. It is hereby found that regulation by the Board and cooperation by this State and the United States as contemplated by this Article are appropriate to protect the health and welfare of consumers and otherwise effectuate the purposes of this Article.

(b) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the General Assembly to provide for the inspection of poultry and poultry products and otherwise regulate the processing and distribution of such articles as hereinafter prescribed to prevent the movement or sale in intrastate commerce of poultry and poultry products which are adulterated or misbranded. It is the intent of the General Assembly that when poultry and poultry products are condemned because of disease, the reason for condemnation in such instances shall be supported by scientific fact, information, or criteria, and such condemnation under this Article shall be achieved through uniform inspection standards and uniform application thereof. (1971, c. 677, ss. 2, 3.)

§ 106-549.51. Definitions.

For purposes of this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings stated below:

- (1) "Adulterated" shall apply to any poultry product under one or more of the following circumstances:
 - a. If it bears or contains any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health; but in case the substance is not an added substance, such article shall not be considered adulterated under this clause if the quantity of such substance in or on such article does not ordinarily render it injurious to health;
 - b.
 1. If it bears or contains (by reason of administration of any substance to the live poultry or otherwise) any added poisonous or added deleterious substance

- (other than one which is a pesticide chemical in or on a raw agricultural commodity; a food additive; or a color additive) which may, in the judgment of the Commissioner, make such article unfit for human food;
2. If it is, in whole or in part, a raw agricultural commodity and such commodity bears or contains a pesticide chemical which is unsafe within the meaning of section 408 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;
 3. If it bears or contains any food additive which is unsafe within the meaning of section 409 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;
 4. If it bears or contains any color additive which is unsafe within the meaning of section 706 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act: Provided, that an article which is not otherwise deemed adulterated under paragraphs 2, 3, or 4 shall nevertheless be deemed adulterated if use of the pesticide chemical, food additive, or color additive in or on such article is prohibited by regulations of the Board in official establishments;
- c. If it consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, or decomposed substance or is for any other reason unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome, or otherwise unfit for human food;
 - d. If it has been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth, or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health;
 - e. If it is, in whole or in part, the product of any poultry which has died otherwise than by slaughter;
 - f. If its container is composed, in whole or in part, of any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render the contents injurious to health;
 - g. If it has been intentionally subjected to radiation, unless the use of the radiation was in conformity with a regulation or exemption in effect pursuant to section 409 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; or
 - h. If any valuable constituent has been in whole or in part omitted or abstracted therefrom; or if any substance has been substituted, wholly or in part therefor; or if damage or inferiority has been concealed in any manner; or if any substance has been added thereto or mixed or packed therewith so as to increase its bulk or weight, or reduce its quality or strength, or make it appear better or of greater value than it is.
- (2) "Animal food manufacturer" means any person engaged

in the business of manufacturing or processing animal food derived wholly or in part from carcasses, or parts or products of the carcasses, of poultry.

- (3) "Board" means the North Carolina Board of Agriculture.
- (4) "Capable of use of human food" shall apply to any carcass, or part or product of a carcass, of any poultry, unless it is denatured or otherwise identified as required by regulations prescribed by the Board to deter its use as human food, or it is naturally inedible by humans.
- (5) "Color additive" shall have the same meaning for purposes of this Article as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
- (6) "Commissioner" means the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture or his authorized representative.
- (7) "Container" or "package" includes any box, can, tin, cloth, plastic, or other receptacle, wrapper, or cover.
- (8) "Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act" means the act so entitled, approved June 25, 1938 (52 Stat. 1040), and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto.
- (9) "Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act" means the act so entitled, approved August 28, 1957 (71 Stat. 441), as amended by the Wholesome Poultry Products Act (82 Stat. 791).
- (10) "Food additive" shall have the same meaning for purposes of this Article as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
- (11) "Immediate container" includes any consumer package; or any other container in which poultry products, not consumer packaged, are packed.
- (12) "Inspection service" means the official government service within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services designated by the Commissioner as having the responsibility for carrying out the provisions of this Article.
- (13) "Inspector" means an employee or official of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services authorized by the Commissioner to inspect poultry and poultry products under the authority of this Article, or any employee or official of the government of any county or other governmental subdivision of this State authorized by the Commissioner to inspect poultry and poultry products under authority of this Article, under an agreement entered into between the Department and such governmental subdivision.
- (14) "Intrastate commerce" means commerce within this State.
- (15) "Label" means a display of written, printed, or graphic matter upon any article or the immediate container (not including package liners) of any article.
- (16) "Labeling" means all labels and other written, printed, or graphic matter
 - a. Upon any article or any of its containers or

- wrappers, or
 - b. Accompanying such article.
- (17) "Misbranded" shall apply to any poultry product under one or more of the following circumstances:
- a. If its labeling is false or misleading in any particular;
 - b. If it is offered for sale under the name of another food;
 - c. If it is an imitation of another food, unless its label bears, in type of uniform size and prominence, the word "imitation" and immediately thereafter, the name of the food imitated;
 - d. If its container is so made, formed, or filled as to be misleading;
 - e. Unless it bears a label showing
 - 1. The name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; and
 - 2. An accurate statement of the quantity of the product in terms of weight, measure, or numerical count;
- Provided, that under paragraph 2 of this subsubdivision e, reasonable variations may be permitted, and exemptions as to small packages or articles not in packages or other containers may be established, by regulations prescribed by the Board;
- f. If any word, statement, or other information required by or under authority of this Article to appear on the label or other labeling is not prominently placed thereon with such conspicuousness (as compared with other words, statements, designs, or devices, in the labeling) and in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use;
 - g. If it purports to be or is represented as a food for which a definition and standard of identity or composition has been prescribed by regulations of the Board under G.S. 106-549.55 unless
 - 1. It conforms to such definition and standard, and
 - 2. Its label bears the name of the food specified in the definition and standard and, insofar as may be required by such regulations, the common names of optional ingredients (other than spices, flavoring, and coloring) present in such food;
 - h. If it purports to be or is represented as a food for which a standard or standards of fill of container have been prescribed by regulations of the Board under G.S. 106-549.55, and it falls below the standard of fill of container applicable thereto, unless its label bears, in such manner and form as such regulations specify, a statement that it falls below such standard;

- i. If it is not subject to the provisions of subdivision g, unless its label bears
 - 1. The common or usual name of the food, if any there be, and
 - 2. In case it is fabricated from two or more ingredients, the common or usual name of each such ingredient; except that spices, flavorings, and colorings may, when authorized by the Commissioner be designated as spices, flavorings, and colorings without naming each: Provided, that, to the extent that compliance with the requirements of clause 2 of this subdivision i is impracticable, or results in deception or unfair competition, exemptions shall be established by regulations promulgated by the Board;
 - j. If it purports to be or is represented for special dietary uses, unless its label bears such information concerning its vitamin, mineral, and other dietary properties as the Board, after consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, determines to be, and by regulations prescribes as, necessary in order fully to inform purchasers as to its value for such uses;
 - k. If it bears or contains any artificial flavoring, artificial coloring, or chemical preservative, unless it bears labeling stating that fact: Provided, that, to the extent that compliance with the requirements of this subdivision k is impracticable, exemptions shall be established by regulations promulgated by the Board; or
 - l. If it fails to bear on its containers, and in the case of nonconsumer packaged carcasses (if the Commissioner so requires) directly thereon, as the Board may by regulations prescribe, the official inspection legend and official establishment number of the establishment where the article was processed, and, unrestricted by any of the foregoing, such other information as the Board may require in such regulations to assure that it will not have false or misleading labeling and that the public will be informed of the manner of handling required to maintain the article in a wholesome condition.
- (18) "Official certificate" means any certificate prescribed by regulation of the Board for issuance by an inspector or other person performing official functions under this Article.
- (19) "Official device" means any device prescribed or authorized by the Board for use in applying any official mark.
- (20) "Official establishment" means any establishment as determined by the Commissioner at which inspection of the slaughter of poultry, or the processing of

- poultry products, is maintained under the authority of this Article.
- (21) "Official inspection legend" means any symbol prescribed by regulation of the Board showing that an article was inspected for wholesomeness in accordance with this Article.
 - (22) "Official mark" means the official inspection legend or any other symbol prescribed by regulation of the Board to identify the status of any article or poultry under this Article.
 - (23) "Person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other business entity.
 - (24) "Pesticide chemical" shall have the same meaning for purposes of this Article as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
 - (25) "Poultry" means any domesticated bird, whether live or dead.
 - (25a) "Poultry composting facility" means a structure or enclosure in which whole, unprocessed poultry carcasses are decomposed by a natural process into an organic, biologically safe by-product that can be used for plant food.
 - (26) "Poultry product" means any poultry carcass, or part thereof; or any product which is made wholly or in part from any poultry carcass or part thereof, excepting products which contain poultry ingredients only in a relatively small proportion or historically have not been considered by consumers as products of the poultry food industry, and which are exempted by the Board from definition as a poultry product under such conditions as the Board may prescribe to assure that the poultry ingredients in such products are not adulterated and that such products are not represented as poultry products.
 - (27) "Poultry products broker" means any person engaged in the business of buying or selling poultry products on commission, or otherwise negotiating purchases or sales of such articles other than for his own account or as an employee of another person.
 - (28) "Processed" means slaughtered, canned, salted, stuffed, rendered, boned, cut up, or otherwise manufactured or processed.
 - (29) "Raw agricultural commodity" shall have the same meaning for purposes of this Article as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
 - (30) "Renderer" means any person engaged in the business of rendering carcasses, or parts or products of the carcasses, or poultry, except rendering conducted under inspection or exemption under this Article.
 - (31) "Shipping container" means any container used or intended for use in packaging the product packed in an immediate container. (1971, c. 677, s. 4; 1995, c. 543, s. 3; 1997-261, s. 61.)

§ 106-549.51A. Article applicable to domesticated rabbits.

The provisions of this Article shall apply to domesticated rabbits. (1971, c. 677, s. 25.)

§ 106-549.52. State and federal cooperation.

(a) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is hereby designated as the State agency which shall be responsible for cooperating with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States under the provisions of section 5 of the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act and such agency is directed to cooperate with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States in developing and administering the poultry products inspection program of this State under this Article and in developing and administering the program of this State under G.S. 106-549.58 in such a manner as will effectuate the purposes of this Article and said federal act.

(b) In such cooperative efforts, the Department is authorized to accept from said Secretary advisory assistance in planning and otherwise developing the State program, technical and laboratory assistance and training (including necessary curricular and instructional materials and equipment), and financial and other aid for administration of such a program.

(c) The Department is further authorized to recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture such officials or employees of this State as the Commissioner shall designate, for appointment to the advisory committees provided for in section 5 of the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act; and the Commissioner shall serve as the representative of the Governor for consultation with said Secretary under subsection (c) of section 5 of said act. (1971, c. 677, s. 5; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1014, s. 155(b); 1997-261, s. 62.)

§ 106-549.53. Inspection; condemnation of adulterated poultry.

(a) For the purpose of preventing the entry into or flow or movement in intrastate commerce of any poultry product which is capable of use as human food and is adulterated, the Commissioner shall, where and to the extent considered by him necessary, cause to be made by inspectors antemortem inspection of poultry in each official establishment engaged in processing poultry or poultry products solely for intrastate commerce.

(b) The Commissioner, whenever processing operations are being conducted, shall cause to be made by inspectors postmortem inspection of the carcass of each bird processed, and at any time such quarantine, segregation and reinspection as he deems necessary of poultry and poultry products capable of use as human food in each official establishment engaged in processing such poultry or poultry products solely for intrastate commerce.

(c) All poultry carcasses and parts thereof and other poultry products found to be adulterated shall be condemned and shall, if no appeal be taken from such determination of condemnation, be destroyed for human food purposes under the supervision of an inspector: Provided, that carcasses, parts, and products, which may by reprocessing be made not adulterated, need not be so condemned and destroyed if so reprocessed under the supervision of an inspector and thereafter found to be not adulterated. If an appeal be taken from such determination, the carcasses, parts, or products shall be appropriately marked and segregated pending completion of an appeal inspection, which appeal shall be at the cost of the appellant if the Commissioner determines that the appeal is frivolous. If the determination of

condemnation is sustained the carcasses, parts, and products shall be destroyed for food purposes under the supervision of an inspector. (1971, c. 677, s. 6.)

§ 106-549.54. Sanitation of premises; regulations.

(a) Each official establishment slaughtering poultry or processing poultry products solely for intrastate commerce shall have such premises, facilities, and equipment, and be operated in accordance with such sanitary practices, as are required by regulations promulgated by the Board for the purpose of preventing the entry into or flow or movement in intrastate commerce of poultry products which are adulterated.

(b) The Commissioner shall refuse to render inspection to any establishment whose premises, facilities, or equipment, or the operation thereof, fail to meet the requirements of this section. (1971, c. 677, s. 7.)

§ 106-549.55. Labeling standards; false and misleading labels.

(a) All poultry products inspected at any official establishment under the authority of this Article and found to be not adulterated, shall at the time they leave the establishment bear, in distinctly legible form, on their shipping containers and immediate containers as the Commissioner may require, the information required under subdivision (17) of G.S. 106-549.51. In addition, the Commissioner whenever he determines such action is practicable and necessary for the protection of the public, may require nonconsumer packaged carcasses at the time they leave the establishment to bear directly thereon in distinctly legible form any information required under such subdivision (17).

(b) The Board, whenever it determines such action is necessary for the protection of the public, may prescribe:

- (1) The styles and sizes of type to be used with respect to material required to be incorporated in labeling to avoid false or misleading labeling in marking or otherwise labeling any articles or poultry subject to this Article;
- (2) Definitions and standards of identity or composition for articles subject to this Article and standards of fill of container for such articles not inconsistent with any such standards established under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or under the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act, and there shall be consultation between the Commissioner or his authorized representative and the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States prior to the issuance of such standards to avoid inconsistency between such standards and the federal standards.

(c) No article subject to this Article shall be sold or offered for sale by any person in intrastate commerce, under any name or other marking or labeling which is false or misleading, or in any container of a misleading form or size, but established trade names and other marking and labeling and containers which are not false or misleading and which are approved by the Commissioner, are permitted.

(d) If the Commissioner has reason to believe that any

marking or labeling or the size or form of any container in use or proposed for use with respect to any article subject to this Article is false or misleading in any particular, he may direct that such use be withheld unless the marking, labeling, or container is modified in such manner as he may prescribe so that it will not be false or misleading. A person who uses or proposes to use the marking, labeling, or container and who does not accept the determination of the Commissioner may commence a contested case under G.S. 150B-23. If directed by the Commissioner, the marking, labeling, or container may not be used pending a final decision. (1971, c. 677, s. 8; 1973, c. 1331, s. 3; 1987, c. 827, s. 36; 1989, c. 770, s. 26.)

§ 106-549.56. Prohibited acts.

(a) No person shall:

- (1) Slaughter any poultry or process any poultry products which are capable of use as human food at any establishment processing any such articles solely for intrastate commerce, except in compliance with the requirements of this Article;
- (2) Sell, transport, offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce,
 - a. Any poultry products which are capable of use as human food and are adulterated or misbranded at the time of such sale, transportation, offer for sale or transportation, or receipt for transportation; or
 - b. Any poultry products required to be inspected under this Article unless they have been so inspected and passed;
- (3) Do, with respect to any poultry products which are capable of use as human food, any act while they are being transported in intrastate commerce or held for sale after such transportation, which is intended to cause or has the effect of causing such products to be adulterated or misbranded;
- (4) Sell, transport, offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce or from an official establishment, any slaughtered poultry from which the blood, feathers, feet, head, or viscera have not been removed in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board, except as may be authorized by regulations of the Board;
- (5) Use to his own advantage, or reveal other than to the authorized representatives of the State government or any other government in their official capacity, or as ordered by a court in any judicial proceedings, any information acquired under the authority of this Article concerning any matter which is entitled to protection as a trade secret.

(b) No brand manufacturer, printer, or other person shall cast, print, lithograph, or otherwise make any device containing any official mark or simulation thereof, or any label bearing any such mark or simulation, or any form of official certificate or simulation thereof, except as authorized by the Commissioner.

(c) No person shall:

- (1) Forge any official device, mark or certificate;
- (2) Without authorization from the Commissioner use any official device, mark, or certificate, or simulation thereof, or alter, detach, deface, or destroy any official device, mark, or certificate;
- (3) Contrary to the regulations prescribed by the Board, fail to use, or to detach, deface, or destroy any official device, mark, or certificate;
- (4) Knowingly possess, without promptly notifying the Commissioner, any official device or any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official certificate or any device or label or any carcass of any poultry, or part or product thereof, bearing any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official mark;
- (5) Knowingly make any false statement in any shipper's certificate or other nonofficial or official certificate provided for in the regulations prescribed by the Board; or
- (6) Knowingly represent that any article has been inspected and passed, or exempted, under this Article when, in fact, it has, respectively, not been so inspected and passed, or exempted. (1971, c. 677, s. 9.)

§ 106-549.57. No poultry in violation of Article processed.

No establishment processing poultry or poultry products solely for intrastate commerce shall process any poultry or poultry product capable of use as human food except in compliance with the requirements of this Article. (1971, c. 677, s. 10.)

§ 106-549.58. Poultry not for human consumption; records; registration.

(a) Inspection shall not be provided under this Article at any establishment for the slaughter of poultry or the processing of any carcasses or parts or products of poultry, which are not intended for use as human food, but such articles shall, prior to their offer for sale or transportation in intrastate commerce, unless naturally inedible by humans, be denatured or otherwise identified as prescribed by regulations of the Board to deter their use for human food. No person shall buy, sell, transport, or offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce, any poultry carcasses or parts or products thereof which are not intended for use as human food unless they are denatured or otherwise identified as required by the regulations of the Board or are naturally inedible by humans.

(b) The following classes of persons shall, for such period of time as the Board may by regulations prescribe, not to exceed two years unless otherwise directed by the Commissioner for good cause shown, keep such records as are properly necessary for the effective enforcement of this Article in order to insure against adulterated or misbranded poultry products for the American consumer; and all persons subject to such requirements shall, at all reasonable times, upon notice by a duly authorized representative of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer

Services, afford such representative access to their places of business and opportunity to examine the facilities, inventory, and records thereof, to copy all such records, and to take reasonable samples of their inventory upon payment of the fair market value therefor:

- (1) Any person that engages in the business of slaughtering any poultry or processing, freezing, packaging, or labeling any carcasses, or parts or products of carcasses, of any poultry, for intrastate commerce, for use as human food or animal food;
- (2) Any person that engages in the business of buying or selling (as poultry products brokers; wholesalers or otherwise), or transporting, in intrastate commerce, or storing in or for intrastate commerce, any carcasses, or parts or products of carcasses, of any poultry;
- (3) Any person that engages in business, in or for intrastate commerce, as a renderer, or engages in the business of buying, selling, or transporting, in intrastate commerce, any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased poultry or parts of the carcasses of any poultry that died otherwise than by slaughter.

(c) No person shall engage in business, in or for intrastate commerce, as a poultry products broker, renderer, or animal food manufacturer, or engage in business in intrastate commerce as a wholesaler of any carcasses, or parts or products of the carcasses, of any poultry, whether intended for human food or other purposes, or engage in business as a public warehouseman storing any such articles in or for intrastate commerce, or engage in the business of buying, selling, or transporting in intrastate commerce any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased poultry, or parts of the carcasses of any poultry that died otherwise than by slaughter, unless, when required by regulations of the Board, he has registered with the Commissioner his name, and the address of each place of business at which, and all trade names under which, he conducts such business.

(d) No person engaged in the business of buying, selling, or transporting in intrastate commerce, dead, dying, disabled, or diseased poultry, or any parts of the carcasses of any poultry that died otherwise than by slaughter, shall buy, sell, transport, offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation in intrastate commerce, any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased poultry or parts of the carcasses of any poultry that died otherwise than by slaughter, unless such transaction or transportation is made in accordance with such regulations as the Board may prescribe to assure that such poultry, or the unwholesome parts or products thereof, will be prevented from being used for human food. (1971, c. 677, s. 11; 1997-261, s. 109.)

§ 106-549.59. Punishment for violations; carriers exempt; interference with enforcement.

(a) Any person who violates the provisions of G.S. 106-549.56, 106-549.57, 106-549.58 or 106-549.61 is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor; but if such violation involves intent to defraud, or any distribution or attempted distribution of an article that is adulterated (except as defined in G.S.

106-549.51(1)h), such person is guilty of a Class H felony which may include a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). When construing or enforcing the provisions of said sections the act, omission, or failure of any person acting for or employed by any individual, partnership, corporation, or association within the scope of his employment or office shall in every case be deemed the act, omission, or failure of such individual, partnership, corporation, or association, as well as of such person.

(b) No carrier shall be subject to the penalties of this Article, other than the penalties for violation of G.S. 106-549.58, by reason of his receipt, carriage, holding, or delivery, in the usual course of business, as a carrier, of poultry or poultry products, owned by another person unless the carrier has knowledge, or is in possession of facts which would cause a reasonable person to believe that such poultry or poultry products were not inspected or marked in accordance with the provisions of this Article or were otherwise not eligible for transportation under this Article or unless the carrier refuses to furnish on request of a representative of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services the name and address of the person from whom he received such poultry or poultry products, and copies of all documents, if any there be, pertaining to the delivery of the poultry or poultry products to such carrier.

(c) Any person who forcibly assaults, resists, opposes, impedes, intimidates, or interferes with any person while engaged in or on account of the performance of his official duties under this Article is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor which may include a fine of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000). Whoever, in the commission of any such acts, uses a deadly or dangerous weapon, is guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor which may include a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). (1971, c. 677, s. 12; 1997-261, s. 109; 1999-408, s. 7.)

§ 106-549.60. Notice of violation.

Before any violation of this Article is reported by the Commissioner to any North Carolina district attorney for institution of a criminal proceeding, the person against whom such proceeding is contemplated shall be given reasonable notice of the alleged violation and opportunity to present his views orally or in writing with regard to such contemplated proceeding. Nothing in this Article shall be construed as requiring the Commissioner or his authorized representative to report for criminal prosecution of this Article whenever he believes that the public interest will be adequately served and compliance with the Article obtained by a suitable written notice or warning. (1971, c. 677, s. 13; 1973, c. 47, s. 2.)

§ 106-549.61. Regulations authorized.

(a) The Commissioner may by regulations prescribe conditions under which poultry products capable of use as human food shall be stored or otherwise handled by any person engaged in the business of buying, selling, freezing, storing, or transporting, in or for intrastate commerce, such articles, whenever the Commissioner deems such action necessary to assure that such articles will not be adulterated or misbranded when

delivered to the consumer. Violation of any such regulation is prohibited.

(b) The Board shall promulgate such other rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Article.

(c) When opportunity is afforded for submission of comments by interested persons on proposed rules or regulations under this Article, it shall include opportunity for oral presentation of views. (1971, c. 677, s. 14.)

§ 106-549.62. Intrastate operations exemptions.

(a) The Board shall, by regulation and under such conditions, including requirements, as to sanitary standards, practices, and procedures as it may prescribe, exempt from specific provisions of this Article with respect to processing of poultry or poultry products solely for intrastate commerce and distribution of poultry or poultry products only in such commerce:

- (1) Retail dealers with respect to poultry products sold directly to consumers in individual retail stores, if the only processing operation performed by such retail dealers is the cutting up of poultry products on the premises where such sales to consumers are made;
- (2) For such period of time as the Commissioner determines that it would be impracticable to provide inspection and the exemption will aid in the effective administration of this Article, any person engaged in the processing of poultry or poultry products and the poultry or poultry products processed by such person: Provided, however, that no such exemption shall continue in effect more than 120 days after enactment of this Article;
- (3) Persons slaughtering, processing, or otherwise handling poultry or poultry products which have been or are to be processed as required by recognized religious dietary laws, to the extent that the Commissioner determines necessary to avoid conflict with such requirements while still effectuating the purposes of this Article;
- (4) The slaughtering by any person of poultry of his own raising, and the processing by him and transportation of the poultry products exclusively for use by him and members of his household and his nonpaying guests and employees;
- (5) The custom slaughter by any person of poultry delivered by the owner thereof for such slaughter, and the processing by such slaughterer and transportation of the poultry products exclusively for use, in the household of such owner, by him and members of his household and his nonpaying guests and employees: Provided, that such custom slaughterer does not engage in the business of buying or selling any poultry products capable of use as human food;
- (6) The slaughtering and processing of poultry products by any poultry producer on his own premises with respect to sound and healthy poultry raised on his

- premises and the distribution by any person of the poultry products derived from such operations, if, in lieu of other labeling requirements, such poultry products are identified with the name and address of such poultry producer, and if they are not otherwise misbranded, and are sound, clean, and fit for human food when so distributed; and
- (7) The slaughtering of sound and healthy poultry or the processing of poultry products of such poultry by any poultry producer or other person for distribution by him directly to household consumers, restaurants, hotels, and boardinghouses, for use in their own dining rooms, or in the preparation of meals for sales direct to consumers, if, in lieu of other labeling requirements, such poultry products are identified with the name and address of the processor, and if they are not otherwise misbranded and are sound, clean, and fit for human food when distributed by such processor.

(b) In addition to the specific exemptions authorized in subsection (a), the Board shall, when it determines that the protection of consumers from adulterated or misbranded poultry products will not be impaired by such action, provide by regulation, consistent with subsection (c) for the exemption of the operation and products of small enterprises (including poultry producers), not exempted under subsection (a), which are engaged in slaughtering and/or cutting up poultry for distribution as carcasses or parts thereof, solely for distribution within this State, from such provisions of this Article as it deems appropriate, while still protecting the public from adulterated or misbranded products, under such conditions, including sanitary requirements, as it shall prescribe to effectuate the purposes of this Article.

(c) The exemptions provided for in subdivisions (a)(6) and (7) above shall not apply if the poultry producer or other person engages in the current calendar year in the business of buying or selling any poultry or poultry products other than as specified in such subdivisions. No exemption under subdivisions (a)(6) or (7) or subsection (b) shall apply to any poultry producer or other person who slaughters or processes the products of more than 5,000 turkeys or an equivalent number of poultry of all species in the current calendar year (four birds of other species being deemed the equivalent of one turkey).

(d) The provisions of this Article requiring inspection shall not apply to operations of types traditionally and usually conducted at retail stores and restaurants, when conducted at any retail store or restaurant or similar retail-type establishment for sale in normal retail quantities or service of such articles to consumers at such establishments, if no poultry or poultry products are processed at the establishment for distribution outside this State or otherwise subject to inspection under the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act.

(e) The provisions of this Article shall not apply to poultry producers with respect to poultry of their own raising on their own farms if (i) such producers slaughter not more than 250 turkeys, or not more than an equivalent number of birds of all species during the calendar year for which this exemption is being determined (four birds of other species being deemed the equivalent of one turkey); (ii) such poultry producers do not engage in buying or selling poultry products other than those

produced from poultry raised on their own farms; and (iii) such poultry moves only in intrastate commerce.

(f) The adulteration and misbranding provisions of this Article, other than the requirement of the inspection legend, shall apply to articles which are exempted from inspection under this section, except as otherwise specified under subsections (a), (b), or (e).

(g) The Commissioner may by order suspend or terminate any exemption under subsections (a) or (b) of this section with respect to any person whenever he finds that such action will aid in effectuating the purposes of this Article. (1971, c. 677, s. 15.)

§ 106-549.63. Commissioner may limit entry of products to establishments.

The Commissioner may limit the entry of poultry products and other materials into any official establishment, under such conditions as he may prescribe to assure that allowing the entry of such articles into such inspected establishments will be consistent with the purposes of this Article. (1971, c. 677, s. 16.)

§ 106-549.64. Refusal of inspection services; hearing; appeal.

(a) The Commissioner may (for such period, or indefinitely, as he deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Article) refuse to provide, or withdraw, inspection service under this Article with respect to any establishment if he determines that such applicant or recipient is unfit to engage in any business requiring inspection upon this Article because the applicant or recipient or anyone responsibly connected with the applicant or recipient, has been convicted, in any federal or State court, within the previous 10 years of

- (1) Any felony or more than one misdemeanor under any law based upon the acquiring, handling, or distributing of adulterated, mislabeled, or deceptively packaged food or fraud in connection with transactions in food; or
- (2) Any felony, involving fraud, bribery, extortion, or any other act or circumstances indicating a lack of the integrity needed for the conduct of operations affecting the public health. For the purpose of this subsection a person shall be deemed to be responsibly connected with the business if he was a partner, officer, director, holder, or owner of ten per centum (10%) or more of its voting stock or employee in a managerial or executive capacity.

(b) Proceedings concerning the refusal or withdrawal of inspection services shall be conducted in accordance with Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. A refusal or withdrawal of inspection services by the Commissioner shall continue in effect pending a final decision in a contested case unless the Commissioner orders otherwise.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 37. (1971, c. 677, s. 17; 1973, c. 1331, s. 3; 1987, c. 827, s. 37.)

§ 106-549.65. Product detained if in violation.

Whenever any poultry product, or any product exempted from the definition of a poultry product, or any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased poultry is found by any inspector of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon any premises where it is held for purposes of, or during or after distribution in intrastate commerce, and there is reason to believe that any such article is adulterated or misbranded and is capable of use as human food, or that it has not been inspected, in violation of the provisions of this Article or of any other State or federal law or that it has been or is intended to be, distributed in violation of any such provisions, it may be detained by such representative for a period not to exceed 20 days, pending action under G.S. 106-549.66 or notification of any federal, State, or other governmental authorities having jurisdiction over such article or poultry, and shall not be moved by any person, from the place at which it is located when so detained, until released by such representative. All official marks may be required by such representative to be removed from such article or poultry before it is released unless it appears to the satisfaction of the area supervisor of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Poultry Inspection Service that the article or poultry is eligible to retain such marks. (1971, c. 677, s. 18; 1997-261, s. 109.)

§ 106-549.66. Seizure or condemnation proceedings.

(a) Any poultry product, or any dead, dying, or disabled, or diseased poultry, that is being transported in intrastate commerce, subject to this Article, or is held for sale in this State after such transportation, and that

- (1) Is or has been processed, sold, transported, or otherwise distributed or offered or received for distribution in violation of this Article, or
- (2) Is capable of use as human food and is adulterated or misbranded, or
- (3) In any other way is in violation of this Article, shall be liable to be proceeded against and seized and condemned, at any time, on an affidavit filed in any superior court within the jurisdiction of which the article or poultry is found. If the article or poultry is condemned it shall, after entry of the judgment, be disposed of by destruction or sale as the court may direct and the proceeds, if sold, less the court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses, shall be paid into the general fund of this State, but the article or poultry shall not be sold contrary to the provisions of this Article, or the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act or the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act: Provided, that upon the execution and delivery of a good and sufficient bond conditioned that the article or poultry shall not be sold or otherwise disposed of contrary to the provisions of this Article or the laws of the United States, the court may direct that such article or poultry be delivered to the owner thereof subject to such supervision by authorized representatives of the Commissioner as is necessary to insure compliance with the applicable laws. When

an order of condemnation is entered against the article or poultry and it is released under bond, or destroyed, court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses shall be awarded against the person, if any, intervening as claimant of the article or poultry. The proceedings in such cases shall conform, as nearly as may be, to civil actions and either party may demand trial by jury of any issue of fact joined in any case, and all such proceedings shall be at the suit of and in the name of the State.

(b) The provisions of this section shall in no way derogate from authority for condemnation or seizure conferred by other provisions of this Article, or other laws. (1971, c. 677, s. 19.)

§ 106-549.67. Superior court jurisdiction; proceedings in name of State.

The superior court is vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain violations of this Article, and shall have jurisdiction in all other kinds of cases arising under this Article. All proceedings for the enforcement or to restrain violations of this Article shall be by and in the name of this State. (1971, c. 677, s. 20.)

§ 106-549.68. Powers of Commissioner; subpoenas; mandamus; self-incrimination; penalties.

(a) The Commissioner shall also have power:

- (1) To gather and compile information concerning and, to investigate from time to time the organization, business, conduct, practices, and management of any person engaged in intrastate commerce, and the relation thereof to other persons;
- (2) To require, by general or special orders, persons engaged in intrastate commerce, or any class of them, or any of them to file with the Commissioner, in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe, annual or special, or both annual and special, reports or answers in writing to specific questions, furnishing to the Commissioner such information as he may require as to the organization, business, conduct, practices, management, and relation to other persons of the person filing such reports or answers in writing. Such reports and answers shall be made under oath, or otherwise, as the Commissioner may prescribe, and shall be filed with the Commissioner within such reasonable period as the Commissioner may prescribe, unless additional time be granted in any case by the Commissioner.

- (b)
- (1) For the purposes of this Article the Commissioner shall at all reasonable times have access to, for the purpose of examination, and the right to copy, any documentary evidence of any person being investigated or proceeded against, and may require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of all documentary evidence of any person relating to any

- matter under investigation. The Commissioner may sign subpoenas and may administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.
- (2) Such attendance of witnesses, and the production of such documentary evidence, may be required at any designated place of hearing. In case of disobedience to a subpoena the Commissioner may invoke the aid of any court designated in G.S. 106-549.67 in requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documentary evidence.
 - (3) Any of the courts designated in G.S. 106-549.67 within the jurisdiction of which such inquiry is carried on may, in case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, issue an order requiring such person to appear before the Commissioner or to produce documentary evidence if so ordered, or to give evidence touching the matter in question; and any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.
 - (4) Upon the application of the Attorney General of this State at the request of the Commissioner, the superior court shall have jurisdiction to issue writs or [of] mandamus commanding any person to comply with the provisions of this Article or any order of the Commissioner made in pursuance thereof.
 - (5) The Commissioner may order testimony to be taken by deposition in any proceeding or investigation pending under this Article at any stage of such proceeding or investigation. Such depositions may be taken before any person designated by the Commissioner and having power to administer oaths. Such testimony shall be reduced to writing by the person taking the deposition, or under his direction and shall then be subscribed by the deponent. Any person may be compelled to appear and depose and to produce documentary evidence in the same manner as witnesses may be compelled to appear and testify and produce documentary evidence before the Commissioner as hereinbefore provided.
 - (6) Witnesses summoned before the Commissioner shall be paid the same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts of this State, and witnesses whose depositions are taken and the persons taking the same shall severally be entitled to the same fees as are paid for like services in such courts.
 - (7) No person shall be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, papers, schedules of charges, contracts, agreements, or other documentary evidence before the Commissioner or in obedience to the subpoena of the Commissioner whether such subpoena be signed or issued by him or his delegate, or in any cause or proceeding, criminal or otherwise, based upon or growing out of any alleged violation of this Article, or of any amendments thereto, on the ground or for the reason

that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him or it may tend to incriminate him or it or subject him or it to a penalty or forfeiture; but no individual shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, except that any individual so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

- (c) (1) Any person that shall neglect or refuse to attend and testify or to answer any lawful inquiry, or to produce documentary evidence, if in his or its power to do so, in obedience to the subpoena or lawful requirement of the Commissioner shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (2) Any person that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry or statement of fact in any report required to be made under this Article, or that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry in any account, record, or memorandum kept by any person subject to this Article or that shall willfully neglect or fail to make, or to cause to be made, full, true, and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda, of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of any person subject to this Article or that shall willfully remove out of the jurisdiction of this State, or willfully mutilate, alter, or by any other means falsify any documentary evidence of any such person, or that shall willfully refuse to submit to the Commissioner or to any of his authorized agents, for the purpose of inspection and taking copies, any documentary evidence of any person subject to this Article in his or its possession or within his or its control, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (3) If any person required by this Article to file any annual or special report shall fail so to do within the time fixed by the Commissioner for filing the same, and such failure shall continue for 30 days after notice of such default, such person shall forfeit to this State the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each and every day of the continuance of such failure, which forfeiture shall be payable into the general fund of this State, and shall be recoverable in a civil suit in the name of the State brought in the superior court where the person has his or its principal office or in any county in which he or it shall do business. It shall be the duty of the Attorney General of this State, to prosecute for the recovery of such forfeitures. The costs and expenses of such prosecution shall be paid out of the amount recovered in such action.
- (4) Any officer or employee of this State who shall

make public any information obtained by the Commissioner without his authority, unless directed by a court, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1971, c. 677, s. 21; 1993, c. 539, ss. 803-805; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 55; c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 106-549.68A. Article applicable to those regulated by federal act.

The requirements of this Article shall apply to persons, establishments, poultry, poultry products and other articles regulated under the Federal Poultry Products Inspection Act only to the extent provided for in section 23 of said federal act. (1971, c. 677, s. 22.)

§ 106-549.69. Inspection costs.

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of this Article, shall be borne by this State, except as provided in G.S. 106-549.52 and except that the cost of overtime and holiday work performed in establishments subject to the provisions of this Article, at such rates as the Commissioner may determine shall be borne by such establishments. Sums received by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in reimbursement for sums paid out for such premium pay work shall be available without fiscal year limitation to carry out the purposes of this section. (1971, c. 677, s. 23; 1997-261, s. 109.)